

Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care Volunteer Orientation Manual



Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care
3200 Carr
Houston, TX 77026
Shelter Services: 713.229.7300
Volunteer Services: BARCvolunteers@cityofhouston.net
www.houstonbarc.com

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care (BARC) Volunteer Program! We are very grateful to have you as a part of our team. We hope that being a volunteer will be extremely rewarding, educational, exciting and fun. You can have a huge impact on the lives of homeless animals. The services that volunteers provide are critical to BARC, and volunteers have been providing valuable services to the animals and staff for many years.

We look forward to collaborating with you and finding every dog and cat a forever home!

Mission Statement

The Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care promotes and protects public health and animal care through animal law enforcement, sheltering, pet placement programs, and pet ownership education.

BARC staff and volunteers share the values of professionalism, responsibility, compassion, commitment, integrity, and accountability with our community partners. These values are exhibited through:

- Providing animal control and care services that minimize fear, pain, stress and suffering to animals in and out of the shelter
- Providing safe and healthy human-animal interactions
- Providing humane, efficient, high-quality care of animals in our shelter
- Promoting responsible pet ownership including licensing, vaccinations, and spaying/neutering
- Promoting compassion toward animals in and out of the shelter

Thank You!

We would like to thank you for choosing to participate in our program. As a volunteer, you are a valuable asset to our organization and to the many animals that need loving homes.

For decades, BARC has provided a multitude of services to the residents and animals of the City of Houston. Current services include sheltering animals, spaying and neutering adoptable animals, animal control services, low cost micro chipping, and pet licensing. The time and energy contributed by volunteers keep these programs functioning. Since your support as a volunteer is so extremely important, your decision to participate must be made with the full understanding of the commitment and responsibility it demands.

This manual has been prepared for you as a reference guide. It contains information regarding our policies and procedures as well as some training resources. Please read it carefully so you will be well equipped to answer questions knowledgeably and provide quality care to the animals at the shelter.

Thank you for giving your time and energy to the animals at Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care. We hope the time you spend here will be as rewarding to you as it is to the animals.

Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care

Services BARC offers

- Sheltering Animals
- Spaying and Neutering of Adoptable Animals
- Animal Control Services
- Low Cost Micro chipping and Vaccinations
- Pet Licensing

Hours of Operation

- Adoption Center (to adopt a dog or cat)
- Animal Regulation / Control (to drop off a sick or injured animal)
- Animal Surrender (to drop off a pet the pet owner can no longer maintain)
 - Monday - Friday: 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM
 - Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM
- Clinic Hours for Adopters, Fosters, and Rescue
 - Monday - Friday: 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM
 - Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Hours for new volunteers

Monday - Friday: 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM

Saturday - Sunday: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Note: Hours may vary on event days

Hours for current volunteers with city issued ID

Monday-Friday: 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Saturday – Sunday: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Volunteer Parking

2700 Evella Street (at rear of BARC facility) with city issued ID

3200 Carr Street (in front of BARC facility) without city issued ID

Contact Information

Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care

3200 Carr

Houston, TX 77026

Shelter Services: 713-229-7300; www.houstonbarc.com

Volunteer Coordinator: BARCvolunteer@cityofhouston.net

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Volunteer Rights

- The right to be given meaningful assignments.
- The right to be treated fairly.
- The right to effective supervision.
- The right to be recognized for good service.

Volunteer Requirements

To be considered for a volunteer position we ask that you:

- Commit to a minimum of 8 hours per month. Refresher training may be required if the monthly minimum is not maintained.
- Commit to Special Projects that your organization partakes in (Organizational Volunteer).
- Submit an online application through the Mayor's Volunteer Initiative Program and complete the BARC Volunteer Application Form.
- Be 16 years or older.
- Obtain written permission from a parent/guardian, if under the age of 18 years of age.
- Attend a volunteer orientation and shelter tour.
- Submit copies of a valid driver's license and current auto insurance policy, if your volunteer activity includes driving.

Application Procedures

- Please sign up online through the Mayor's Volunteer Initiative Program (VIP) (www.houstontx.gov/volunteer). Once your online sign-up has been processed, a Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to schedule an orientation session.
- Prior to orientation, you will need to secure an official badge. Please see the BARC website for specific instructions regarding the badging process.

Volunteer Orientation and Training Program

- Volunteer Orientations are held weekly in the Administration Building Classroom.
- Volunteers must attend orientation prior to assignment.
- The following topics will be covered during orientation and training:
 - BARC Policies and Procedures
 - Overview of BARC Services and Mission
 - City of Houston Animal Regulations
 - Customer Service Policy
 - Volunteer Opportunities available
 - Time clock check in/out process
 - Disease control in kennels
 - Handling of dogs, including behavioral signs
 - This will provide a basic overview of dog handling. A more extensive class will be offered for those positions that require Animal Handling Training.
 - Handling of cats, including behavioral signs
 - This will provide a basic overview of cat handling. A more extensive class will be offered for those positions that require Animal Handling Training.

- Volunteers will be trained in the following areas when they arrive for their assignment:
 - Adoptions
 - Greeter
 - Offsite Adoption Counselor
 - Offsite Adoption Pet Transporter
 - Onsite Adoption Counselor
 - Volunteer Team Leader
 - Administrative Services
 - Administrative Support Specialist
 - Community Educator

When you become a volunteer, we ask that you abide by the following guidelines:

- Adhere to all BARC policies and procedures.
- Complete assigned duties as written in the job description in a professional and prompt manner. You will be assigned only to those duties or duty areas for which you have received appropriate training.
- Report to and be supervised by a designated BARC supervisor or Volunteer Team Leader.
- Abide by the guidance, evaluation and decisions of the BARC supervisor in all matters relating to the conduct of BARC business.
- Schedule work hours in advance with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Participate in all mandatory volunteer training and/or required volunteer meetings.
- Use assigned equipment in an appropriate and safe manner at all times.
- Respect the premises by returning them to orderly condition after completing assigned tasks.
- Inform the Volunteer Coordinator regarding concerns about animal health, safety, and facility conditions as well as issues that need improvement. Volunteers may also submit suggestions and concerns by email to BARCvolunteers@cityofhouston.net.
- Provide changes in personal BARC Volunteer Application information (i.e. name, address, phone, e-mail, medical insurance, and driver's license) to the Volunteer Coordinator in a timely manner so that all records can be kept up to date.

Volunteers work on assigned duties, in designated work areas, at scheduled times.
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Dress Code

- Volunteers, like staff members, represent BARC and the City of Houston to visitors and adoptive families. You should dress with your duties in mind, while maintaining at least a minimum level of neatness.
- Closed toe, non-skid shoes are required at all times.
- No midriffs or excessively short articles of clothing are allowed.
- BARC will issue personal protective equipment and clothing to you as needed.
- A volunteer smock or t-shirt and official City of Houston identification badge will be provided to you. You are required to wear your badge and smock or t-shirt at all times while on duty.

ID badge must be worn at all times. If badge is not worn, you may be asked to leave.

Volunteer Placement

- You may begin service with BARC once you have completed all necessary paperwork, been officially accepted, and attended orientation.

- You may express a preference in placement. However, BARC reserves the right to determine the specific assignment for each volunteer, considering assignment availability and your desired placement, training, and BARC experience. The Volunteer Coordinator will establish Volunteer Assignment Rosters for each shift.
- The Volunteer Assignment Rosters will be posted next to the Volunteer Time Clock in the Administration Building.
- If you are not placed in the assignment or area of your choice, the Volunteer Coordinator will explore other placement opportunities or referral to other agencies, at your request.

Scheduling

- You will be scheduled for service onsite during the following hours of operation:
Monday–Friday: 11:30 AM to 6:00 PM
Saturday and Sunday: 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM
- Duty shifts will be assigned in increments of at least two (2) hours, depending upon your availability. Exceptions will be made on a case by case basis.
- You must schedule your time in advance with the Volunteer Coordinator and provide at least twenty four (24) hours notice if you are unable to report for an assigned duty shift.
- At the beginning and end of each duty shift, we ask that you check in and out, respectively, using the Volunteer Time Clock located in the Administration building. This system allows us to maintain an accurate record of hours worked.

Supervision

- At the start of your shift, please report to the assigned work area to receive specific duty assignments.
- You will be assigned to the Volunteer Coordinator or a Volunteer Team Leader for supervision.
- The Volunteer Coordinator will be your point of contact to resolve issues that cannot be resolved by the assigned supervisor.

Facilities

- You will be assigned to the following work locations:
 - South Kennel
 - North Kennel Cat Ward
 - Front lobby
 - Dog runs
- Certain areas of the shelter are off-limits to volunteers, unless specifically authorized to enter.

Off-limit areas include the Bay Dock, Isolation/Quarantine Ward, Surgery, Maternity Ward, and all personal offices.

- You may park in the parking area at 2700 Evella Street, at the rear of the BARC facility with city issued ID.
- You may use the break room in the Administration building across from the South Kennel.

Customer Service

- Courtesy, politeness and helpfulness are expected of all volunteers when dealing with potential adopters, the public, fellow volunteers and BARC staff.
- Please make every attempt to be discreet when conducting adoption screening with potential adopters.

Volunteer Recognition

BARC is privileged to have numerous dedicated volunteers who support its staff members and the animals it seeks to help. Each month, BARC will recognize a "Volunteer Star of the Month" who will be selected based on outstanding performance.

Privacy

- Any information pertaining to BARC records and cases which you may become privileged to (including names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) as a result of your position is confidential and may not be discussed with others, except as may be required by law.
- Under some circumstances, BARC staff may be prohibited from discussing with you certain specific details regarding cases that are under investigation or pending criminal court action.
- Your residential address and residential phone number will not be disclosed or provided to anyone unless specifically authorized by you or as may be required by law.

Animal Safety

- We ask that you strictly follow all BARC policies related to animal and people safety.
- You are required to wash your hands and/or change your gloves before and after each animal encounter, after cleaning animal cages or animal-care areas, and after contact with feces, blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, exudates, or articles contaminated by these substances.
- In the Adoption Center, volunteers must use a hand sanitizer after each animal contact.
- Please use the provided "pooper scooper" devices to remove any dog feces from the dog runs and parking lot.

Accidents or Injury Reporting

- All accidents or injuries sustained by you during the conduct of your duties at BARC MUST be reported immediately to your supervisor. A bite or scratch is considered an injury and must be treated immediately.
- You are required to fill out an accident or injury report for every incident. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.
- In an emergency situation, please focus on safety first!
- When treating an animal bite, you should:
 - Notify your supervisor.
 - Flush the bite and surrounding area with soap and water or peroxide followed by water.
 - Fill out a Bite Report. The Bite Case unit will need this information to complete its investigation.
 - We encourage you to seek medical attention from your primary physician.

Break from Service

BARC recognizes you may need to take a break from your volunteer service at times. Please notify the Volunteer Coordinator prior to a break in service. Please keep in mind that refresher training may be necessary upon return, depending upon the length of your break from service.

Resignations and Terminations

- If you choose to leave the Volunteer Program, we ask that you notify the Volunteer Coordinator to be removed from the volunteer list. Upon your resignation, you will be required return your badge to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- BARC can elect to terminate or suspend your service if you fail to follow the rules, volunteer agreement and guidelines indicated in this policy. Reasons for termination can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Inhumane treatment or mistreatment of animals
 - Misconduct with or abuse of staff, other volunteers or citizens
 - Falsification of BARC records, including the Volunteer Application
 - Insubordination
 - Theft
 - Possession of drugs or alcohol
 - Use of or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while at BARC or BARC-related events
 - Failure to perform tasks assigned by the Volunteer Coordinator or staff supervisor
 - Presence in off-limit areas
 - Consistent absence from volunteer assignments without notice
 - Deliberate destruction of BARC's or an individual's property
 - Possession of unauthorized weapons or dangerous materials on the BARC facility or at BARC-related events
 - Any other justifiable reason deemed appropriate by the Volunteer Coordinator

Grievance Procedure

- If you are released from service, you have the right to appeal to BARC management.
- A written request for an appeal should be sent to the BARC Bureau Chief, Bureau of Animal Regulation and Care, 3200 Carr Street, Houston, Texas 77026.

Snapshot of Volunteer Opportunities

BARC is committed to effectively utilizing volunteer resources, including appropriate training and supervision, to promote our goals and objectives. We offer the following volunteer opportunities:

Volunteer Role	Job Description	Required Training
Administrative Support Specialist	Assist the Volunteer Coordinator and other BARC Administrative staff with various clerical tasks. This is a great position for those who want to help the shelter but cannot work directly with animals. Volunteer work is available both onsite and offsite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Adoption
Animal Companion	Exercise and socialize dogs/puppies and socialize cats/kittens while at BARC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling
Bather / Groomer	Groom and bathe adoptable dogs while at BARC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling
Community Educator	Teach the general public about the responsibilities of dog or cat ownership. Educate the community on BARC, the services we provide, and our needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling • Animal Adoption
Greeter	Welcome the general public as they enter the BARC facilities and ensure that each visitor is directed promptly to the appropriate BARC resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling • Animal Adoption
Offsite Adoption Counselor	Help place BARC pets in permanent homes by working at Adoption Days throughout the Greater Houston area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling • Animal Adoption
Offsite Adoption Pet Transporter	Help place BARC pets in permanent homes by transporting them to and from Adoption Days sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling • Pet Transporter
Onsite Adoption Counselor	Help place BARC pets in permanent homes while working at the shelter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling • Animal Adoption
Volunteer Team Leader	Work closely with the Volunteer Coordinator to organize, train, and supervise other shelter volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Orientation • Animal Handling • Animal Adoption • Team Leader

Detailed Description of Volunteer Opportunities

Administrative Support Specialist

Description

Administrative Support Specialists assist the Volunteer Coordinator and other BARC Administrative staff with various clerical tasks. This is a great position for those who want to help the shelter but cannot work directly with animals. Volunteer work is available both onsite and offsite.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- After an adoption takes place, make follow-up calls at the end of one week to new adopters to request information about how their new pet is acclimating to their home.
- Provide guidance regarding how to deal with common adjustment problems.
- Answer questions regarding BARC and the services it provides.
- Assist with other administrative tasks as directed.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Qualifications

- Strong telephone communication skills.
- Customer service skills and the ability/desire to work directly with the public.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Adoption Training

Animal Companion

Description

Animal Companions may indicate a preference to work with dogs and/or cats. With dogs, they focus on exercising and socializing the animals. With cats, they focus on socializing cats and kittens. To enhance continuity, each volunteer may be assigned to a specific kennel.

How Can Volunteers Help with Dogs?

- Provide walks and play for shelter dogs and puppies.
- Feed puppies who have not been weaned with formula provided by BARC.
- Inspect the dogs and puppies for fleas and ticks.
- Assist in picking up feces and cleaning up urine to reduce disease transmission among dogs/puppies.
- Provide special treats with staff permission, unless animal is on a restricted diet, which will be noted on the kennel card.
- Check dogs/puppies for possible medical or behavioral problems and report problems to medical staff or team leader.
- Keep dog kennels clean.

How Can Volunteers Help with Cats?

- Interact with shelter cats/kittens to provide socialization so they will be more easily adopted.
- Brush and groom each animal and inspect the animal for fleas and ticks.
- Feed kittens who have not been weaned with formula provided by BARC.
- Provide special treats with staff permission, unless animal is on a restricted diet, which will be noted on the kennel card.
- Check cats/kittens for possible medical or behavioral problems and report problems to medical staff or team leader.
- Keep litter boxes and cat/kitten cages clean.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Team Leader

Volunteer Qualifications

- Basic dog and/or cat handling skills, as appropriate.
- Must be comfortable around different dog and/or cat breeds and personalities.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training

Bather / Groomer

Description

Bathers / Groomers bathe and groom adoptable dogs and puppies sheltered at BARC.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Assist in washing and grooming adoptable dogs and puppies to improve their chances for adoption.
- Assist in removing the animal from its kennel, maintaining control over the animal during bathing and grooming, and putting the animal back in its kennel upon completion.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Team Leader

Volunteer Qualifications

- Basic knowledge of dogs and puppies.
- Must be comfortable around different dog breeds and personalities.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training

Community Educator

Description

Community Educators help teach the general public about the responsibilities of dog or cat ownership, including spaying/neutering, licensing and vaccinations. They also educate the community on BARC, the services we provide, and our needs.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Lead information sessions as requested using educational and marketing materials created by BARC.
- Answer questions regarding BARC and the services it provides.
- Make referrals to other community resources for animal care, such as low cost spaying/neutering.
- Arrive at all offsite events on time.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Qualifications

- Minimum of three months volunteering at BARC.
- Knowledge of BARC and community resources.
- Public speaking experience.
- Customer service skills and the ability/desire to work directly with the public.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.
- Basic dog and cat handling skills.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training
- Animal Adoption Training

Greeter

Description

Greeters welcome the general public as they enter the BARC facilities and ensure that each visitor is directed promptly to the appropriate BARC resources.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Greet all visitors in a friendly, helpful manner.
- Determine the reason for the visit and direct the person to the appropriate area.
- Answer questions regarding BARC and the services it provides.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Team Leader

Volunteer Qualifications

- Knowledge of BARC and the services it provides.
- Customer service skills and the ability/desire to work directly with the public.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.
- Basic dog and cat handling skills.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training
- Animal Adoption Training

Offsite Adoption Counselor

Description

Offsite Adoption Counselors help place BARC pets in permanent homes at Adoption Days held throughout the Greater Houston area. Counselors may indicate a preference to work with dogs and/or cats.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Counsel potential adopters to help find the right pet for them and to make sure they understand the responsibilities and long-term commitment involved in owning a pet.
- Get to know your assigned dogs or cats and their personalities to identify the most suitable home.
- Answer questions from potential adopters regarding the BARC animal adoption process.
- Arrive at event site on time.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Team Leader

Volunteer Qualifications

- Must commit to at least one Saturday or Sunday per month.
- Customer service skills and the ability/desire to work directly with the public.
- Basic dog and/or cat handling skills, as appropriate.
- Ability to work effectively with BARC staff when appropriate.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training
- Animal Adoption Training

Offsite Adoption Pet Transporter

Description

Offsite Adoption Pet Transporters support the adoption process by transporting BARC animals to offsite adoption events.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Assist in the safe transportation of pets to various Adoption Days sites and back to BARC.
- Work closely with the Transportation Coordinator to determine logistics of transportation.
- Arrive at event site on time.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Team Leader

Volunteer Qualifications

- Provide copies of valid, state-issued driver's license and current auto insurance to Volunteer Coordinator.
- Must commit to at least one Saturday or Sunday per month.
- Minimum of three months volunteering at BARC.
- Basic dog and/or cat handling skills, as appropriate.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training
- Pet Transporter Training

Onsite Adoption Counselor

Description

Onsite Adoption Counselors help place BARC pets in permanent homes while working at the shelter. Counselors may indicate a preference to work with dogs and/or cats.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Counsel potential adopters to help find the right pet for them and to make sure they understand the responsibilities and long-term commitment involved in owning a pet.
- Get to know your assigned dogs or cats and their personalities to identify the most suitable home.
- Answer questions from potential adopters regarding the BARC animal adoption process.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Team Leader

Volunteer Qualifications

- Must commit to at least one Saturday or Sunday per month. Additional weekday shifts are also available.
- Customer service skills and the ability/desire to work directly with the public.
- Basic dog and/or cat handling skills, as appropriate.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training
- Animal Adoption Training

Volunteer Team Leader

Description

Volunteer Team Leaders work closely with the Volunteer Coordinator to organize, train, and supervise other shelter volunteers.

How Can Volunteers Help?

- Ensure the volunteer program is running smoothly during duty shifts.
- Attend all required volunteer meetings.
- Maintain a close working relationship with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Help coordinate onsite and offsite animal adoption events.
- Interact with visitors and monitor visitors' interactions with the animals.
- Monitor cleanliness of dog/puppy kennels and cat/kitten open play areas and cages.
- Upon request, take visitors to the appropriate adoption counselors.
- Adoption counseling.

To Whom Will Volunteers Report?

- Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Qualifications

- Minimum of three months volunteering at BARC.
- Ability to commit to 20 hours per month.
- All required training completed.
- Supervisory experience preferred.
- Customer service skills and the ability/desire to work directly with the public.
- Good communication and organization skills.
- Comfortable working with a group.
- Ability to work effectively with shelter staff when appropriate.
- Basic dog and cat handling skills.
- We are looking for "team players" who have positive outlooks and can remain calm and flexible in a shelter environment.

Training Requirements

- Volunteer Orientation
- Animal Handling Training
- Animal Adoption Training
- Team Leader Training